

AT&T Corporation (formally, American Telephone and Telegraph Company)	\$13,997,179	WilTel, Inc. (formerly, WilTel Underseas Cable, Inc.)	5,032,250
AT&T de Puerto Rico	274,470	WorldCom, Inc. (formerly, LDDS Communications, Inc.)	1,378,502
Global One (formerly, Sprint Incorporated)	4,857,205		\$31,143,432
IDB WorldCom Services, Inc. (formerly, IDB Communications, Inc.)	1,427,078	I shall continue to report semiannually on telecommunications payments to the Government of Cuba from United States persons.	
MCI International, Inc. (formerly, MCI Communications Corporation)	4,066,925	WILLIAM J. CLINTON	
Telefonica Larga Distancia de Puerto Rico, Inc.	113,668	The White House, September 10, 1997.	

## Remarks Announcing the American Heritage Rivers Initiative September 11, 1997

Thank you, Jose. I think we should send him around the country to organize other young people, don't you? *[Laughter]* Thank you, Mr. Carlino; to the members of the administration who are here, and the Senators and Members of the House and all the rest of you.

We did not intend to regale you today with the natural splendor and riverfront aura of Room 450—*[laughter]*—of the Old Executive Office Building. I can't really take responsibility for the weather. I wanted to welcome you to Mount Vernon. The Vice President suggested I blame it on climate change. *[Laughter]* But we haven't had time to have the requisite number of studies done. *[Laughter]* So we're here to make the best of it.

Before I start and make remarks about this subject, I do want to say that something has occurred in the United States Senate this morning about which I am personally very pleased and for which I am grateful. I have been working, as everyone knows, since the day I became President to allow all our people to participate in the opportunities that this country offers and will offer in the new century. I think clearly the most important way to do that is to guarantee a world-class education to every young person. Just this morning, an overwhelming bipartisan majority in the Senate, 88 Senators, voted to move forward with the plan that I have advocated to establish national standards of learning in reading and mathematics, and to

test our children in the fourth and eighth grades by 1999.

They have voted to make sure that these examinations would be written by a truly independent, nonpartisan board, and the measure that they have embraced will help parents to ensure that their children will master the basics of reading and math and to help measure the performance of the schools and teachers involved. This is another example of what can happen when people of good will of both parties get together and look to the future and not the past. And thank you, Senators, and I think this is very, very good news.

And what we're here today to talk about is also very good news and profoundly important. If you think about the stories of Pittsburgh and Chicago—I don't know how many of you have been to Pittsburgh to see the rivers there and see the changes in the community that are truly astonishing, in all the other little communities outlying Pittsburgh in southwest Pennsylvania. As you know—I think all of you know, Hillary is from Chicago, so I spent a lot of time in Chicago, and I've spent a lot of nights and days looking at the Chicago River.

And I think it's very important to remember that many of our greatest cities became what they are because they were built on rivers. And now if we want them to be even greater as we move into a totally new era and where their economies are changing, we have to make sure that the rivers that run through them are good,

clean rivers that offer the potential for young people like Jose to do something they can be proud of, to have a place that they can be proud to be a part of, and to preserve a heritage for their own children and grandchildren.

Rivers have always been the lifeblood of our Nation. They nourish our cities. They feed our soils. They allow us to expand our territory in commerce. They permit us, millions upon millions of us, to fish. You heard the Vice President putting in his little gig about the Tennessee rivers. You know, those of us who come from the States with a lot of rural land, all of us grew up living with the rivers, and all of us have these vivid memories of the rivers. When I graduated from law school and I went home to the hills in north Arkansas to live, before Hillary and I married and I bought a home, I rented two different places out in the country on two different rivers. I spent a lot of the happiest days of my life along the Buffalo River in the Ozark Mountains in north Arkansas, which was the very first river set aside by Congress in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. You can't get there from here. *[Laughter]* But if you do, it's worth the effort. *[Laughter]*

Nineteen years ago, when I first ran for Governor of my home State, I called my great-uncle at—who just passed away at the age of 91, and who had only an elementary school education but a very high IQ and a great wit. And we were having a heated election for the United States Senate that year, and I asked my uncle, I said, "Who do you want to win this Senate race?" He said, "I don't care, and I wouldn't care who was going to be Governor if you weren't my kinfolks." *[Laughter]* And I said, "Well, if I get elected, what do you want me to do?" Then he got dead serious. He said, "I want you to make sure that the rivers are clean and pure, so the fish will be in them and I can run my feet in them in the springtime." That was his platform for my campaign. *[Laughter]*

And there were many people of his generation of modest means who knew that if all else failed they could still go to the river in the springtime. And so this is a big part of what we are.

When I leave this office and I go home, I hope to continue a project I've been working on for many years—I worked on as Governor—to help both restore and enhance the development of our capital city at home along the Arkansas River. And the river has to be clean

and pure and fully developed in its natural potential in order for us ever to make the most of that.

So this is a big deal to millions of people. And I suppose that it may be too free of controversy to arouse great interest today here, but we're all trying to change that, just like the Senate did this morning on the education issue. When I saw the two gentlemen before me speaking and then I was looking out here at all the mayors and all the representatives of the local community, about every third sentence they'd be nodding their heads: Yes, what they're saying is absolutely right. And that's a very, very good thing.

Today we are going to rededicate our country to restoring our river heritage and to reaffirm one of our oldest values, the importance of safeguarding our national treasures for all generations to come.

You know, we didn't get to go to Mount Vernon, but I think it's important to say a few words about the Potomac, since that is our river here. George Washington considered it one of the finest rivers in the world. But regrettably, for most of this century the Potomac suffered in ways that President Washington would have been perfectly appalled by. By the 1960's, when I came to school here, the river was so polluted that students on the boating teams at Georgetown actually had to get typhoid shots to go out on the water. But today, thanks to the ongoing—I was not on the crew team; that was my excuse. *[Laughter]* That's a true story. But today, thanks to the ongoing cleanup efforts in communities all up and down this river, the Potomac once again is a genuine, legitimate source of national pride.

All across the country we're seeing this kind of river renaissance. You heard about Chicago and Pittsburgh. We could have talked about Evanston, Wyoming; Cherokee, Iowa; Chattanooga, Tennessee—communities coming together to restore their rivers, to make them both attractive and natural and pure and commercially viable.

Today we take an important step to support and celebrate these efforts when, in a few moments, I will sign an Executive order to launch the new American Heritage Rivers initiative. Through this voluntary program which I first proposed in the State of the Union Address, we will lend our hand of assistance to community-led waterfront projects that protect natural

resources, promote economic revitalization, and preserve our cultural heritage.

For 90 days, starting today, communities that have developed plans to restore and reconnect with their rivers may submit nominations to participate in this innovative initiative. Shortly thereafter, a panel of experts will help me select 10 finalist rivers from among the nominations, each of which will earn a designation as an American Heritage River. These rivers, most likely a mix of rural, suburban, and urban rivers, will receive targeted and coordinated assistance to help bring the community plans to life.

Here is how the initiative might work for an urban river linked by junkyards and abandoned buildings. If the riverfront community comes forward with a good revitalization plan and wins American Heritage River designation, we'll first work with the community to select a skilled, full-time liaison, which we call a river navigator. Maybe we should have called it a river rat. [Laughter] The river navigator will then help the community line up Federal and private resources for everything from improving water quality to cleaning up brownfields to designating a riverfront plaza and finding loans for local entrepreneurs.

Every step of the way, the initiative will be driven by the needs and desires of the communities that choose to participate. There will be no Federal mandates, no regulations, no restric-

tions on property holders' rights. All communities interested in this collaborative concept will be able to learn from the success of the program participants by tapping into a very impressive American Heritage Rivers website.

The reason I'm so pleased by the American Heritage Rivers initiative is that it neatly combines three of the concepts that are closest to my heart, as the Vice President said: First, the notion of environmental stewardship; second, the idea of offering citizen support for a re-invented Government that actually works better and costs less; and finally, once again, that economic prosperity and environmental protection go hand in hand.

We must continue to embrace these three ideas. We must believe in them. We must live by them. The American Heritage Rivers initiative is a great first step. Let the nominations begin.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:52 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Jose Lopez, member of the Chicago River Restoration Crew, known in Chicago as River Rats; and August Carlino, executive director, Pittsburgh Rivers of Steel. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks at a Congressional Reception *September 11, 1997*

Thank you very much. Thank you, Al. Thank you, Tipper. Thank you, Marianne, and to Trent and Tricia, and the Speaker was here earlier—to all of you, thank you for coming.

We tried to put speakers up in the other rooms. We can't get everyone in here. Sometimes the best laid plans don't work. I love it when there's a picnic outside, but if we'd done this last night, all of our food would have been destroyed. And then if we'd done it tonight—it's not raining, but right before you came it rained, so all of our food would have been destroyed again. And we thought at least we ought to feed you well. [Laughter]

But there is a long history of this. I actually thought the Vice President was going to tell you the story of the very first time a President had the Congress to the White House. John Adams was the first President to live here. He spent the last 4 or 5 months of his term in the White House. And the first time he invited Congress here, it was a bitter, bitter cold day in Washington. And as you can imagine, back in 1800 we didn't have any central heat. So John and Abigail Adams literally, themselves, as the Congress Members and their families were coming in, were going from room to room, from fireplace to fireplace. They started with 20 cords of wood; they were trying to throw them into